

**Virginia State Board of Education
Literacy Committee
February 27, 2007
4 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Jefferson Meeting Room, 22nd Floor
James Monroe Building
Richmond, Virginia**

Members Present: Mrs. Isis M. Castro, Chair; Dr. Thomas M. Brewster, Vice Chair; Dr. Mark E. Emblidge; Mrs. Eleanor B. Saslaw; Mr. David L. Johnson; Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.

Purpose of Committee: To focus on increasing literacy among Virginia's school children and strengthening literacy programs for adult learners.

Summary of Committee Meeting:

1. Welcome from Mrs. Castro
2. Presentation: *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* by Dr. Rafael Heller, Senior Policy Associate, Alliance for Excellent Education
 - Highlights:
 - Seventy-one (71) percent of the nation's eighth graders are less than proficient in reading (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005).
 - Low reading levels are associated with high dropout rates.
 - There is an increased emphasis on literacy shifts in the workforce in today's society.
 - Instructional and infrastructure improvements are necessary.
 - New research is available in adolescent literacy.
 - Recommendations were presented.
 - Challenges were outlined.
 - There was a discussion of the Alabama and Florida literacy reform efforts.
4. Successful approaches:
 - a. A panel discussion of literacy approaches at the middle and high school was conducted.
 - b. Panelists: Dr. Thomas Beatty
Principal Leader of Middle Schools
Richmond City Public Schools

Ms. Marjorie Stealey, Principal
Norview High School
Norfolk City Public Schools

Ms. Esther Manns, Subschool IV Administrator
Mount Vernon High School
Fairfax County Public Schools

- b. Panelists addressed the following:
- Adolescent literacy instructional programs and experiences in raising academic achievement across the school population
 - Their role in contributing to the literacy success of their students
 - How literacy needs of students are being addressed, especially with special education students and English language learners
 - Building the capacity of staff to meet adolescent literacy needs
 - Challenges in improving literacy and advice for other principals and their staffs who are facing similar challenges
 - Initiatives they would implement to improve literacy in their schools
 - Suggestions to state leaders on building a state infrastructure to support middle and high school literacy that included reading specialists/teachers at the middle school level, literacy coaches, and examining teacher preparation programs
 - Sustaining the innovations and momentums